

ADDRESS

—TO—

HIS CONSTITUENTS!

—BY—

LIEUT.-COLONEL

JAS. A. SKINNER,

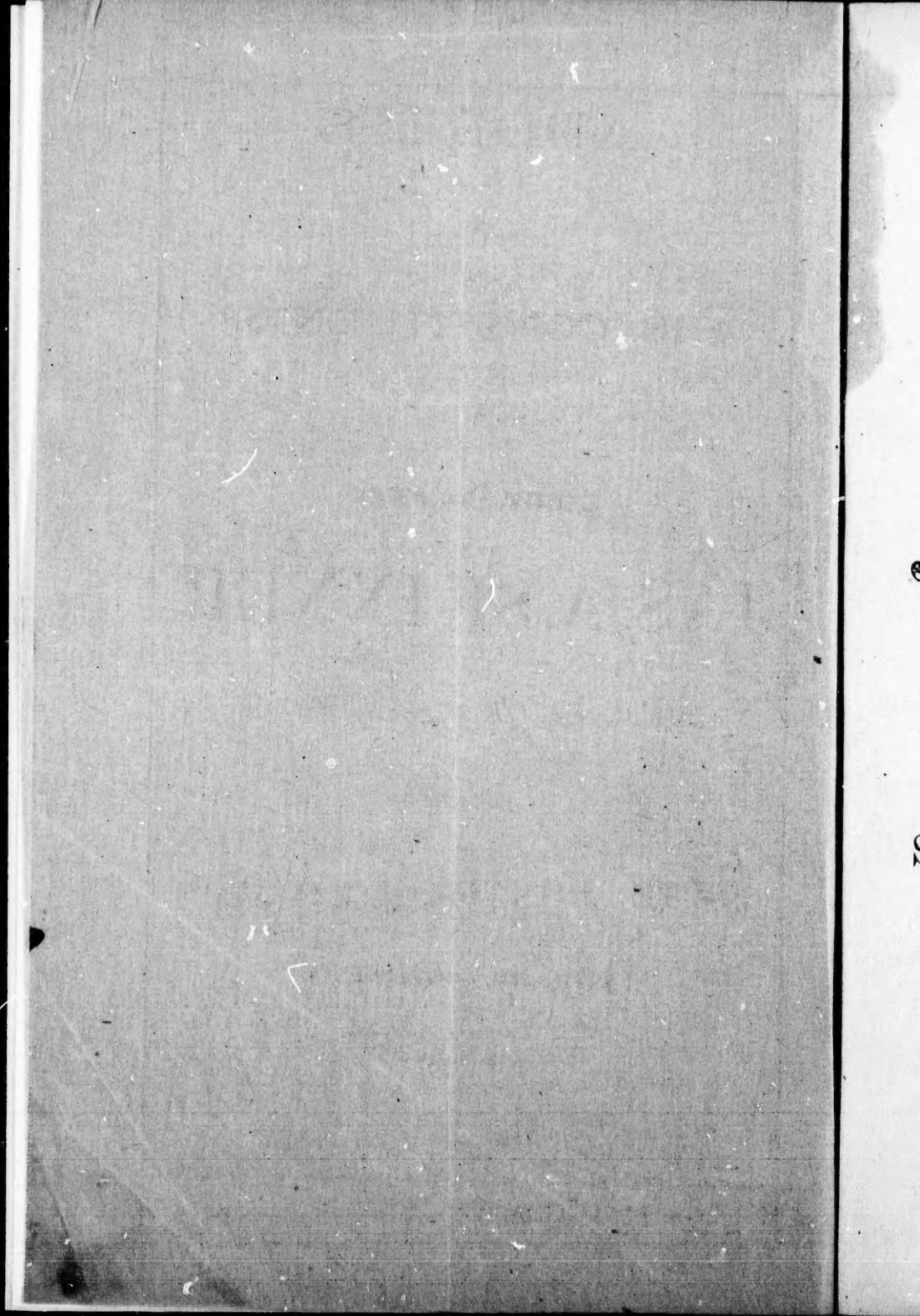
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

—FOR THE—

SOUTH RIDING OF OXFORD,

WITH HIS COMPLIMENTS.

“DUNELG,” August 12th, 1878.



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To the Free and Independent Electors

— OF THE —

SOUTH RIDING OF OXFORD.

GENTLEMEN :—

While in Ottawa attending to my Parliamentary duties as your representative, a Convention representing the Reform Party of the Riding was held, on the 24th of April last, at Mount Elgin. The *Ingersoll Chronicle* of next day, in reporting the proceedings says :—" Notwithstanding the muddy roads and heavy rain it was the largest, most influential and representative Convention ever held in the South Riding of Oxford." Next day I received the following telegram :—

MOUNT ELGIN, April 25th.

To. COL. SKINNER, M. P.

You have been unanimously nominated as Reform Candidate for South Oxford. Do you accept?

T. B. BAIN,
President S. O. Reform Association.

To which I at once replied, thanking the delegates for their expression of confidence and accepting the honor conferred in nominating me as the standard-bearer of the Party.

This being the position of affairs, and as before many weeks there is every likelihood of a general election, I think it but right and proper when again asking you to honor me by sending me to represent you in the Council of the Dominion, to give an account of my stewardship and the reason for the faith that is in me.

On the retirement of our former member, Mr. Bodwell, in 1874, and when making offer of my services and soliciting your suffrages to place me in the position I have now the honor to occupy, I told you in my address that "in politics I have always been a Reformer, and having every confidence in the integrity and honesty of purpose of the present Administration, if chosen by you to occupy the honorable position of your Representative, I will give it my cordial support and will always be found using my best endeavors to procure an honest, economical and efficient administration of the affairs of the country."

At that time we heard a great deal about the incompetency of Mr. Mackenzie and his colleagues; of the impossibility of their being able to manage the affairs of the country; that "their attempt at government was a farce," "would be sure to end in a miserable fiasco;" that Her Majesty's representative would be obliged on account of their sheer incapacity to turn them out of office, and send for Sir John, that "heaven-born statesman," who alone was fit to govern the Dominion. There were false prophets in those days, as there are now.

After four years' parliamentary experience I have the honor to again address you and am glad to be able to say that my confidence in the integrity, honesty and patriotism of Mr. Mackenzie and his colleagues is not only unimpaired but greatly strengthened, but also to bear testimony to the very great ability, indomitable pluck and persevering industry, which he and they have in their respective departments brought to bear on the Herculean task of cleaning out the Angean stable left them as a legacy by their predecessors: The fact that the ability to govern is not the exclusive birthright of the Conservative Party has been forced on the unwilling minds of even the Conservatives themselves, so that for some time back we have heard very little about Mr. Mackenzie's lack of ability—in truth, to use a common expression, that cry is “played out.”

But something else must be got to do duty in its place, so charges of another nature must be hunted up, manufactured if necessary out of whole cloth if the raw material could not be found ready to hand, and I regret to say that the great Conservative Party, in its insatiable greed for office, has stooped very low in that direction. The most infamous charges have been made, or rather insinuated, through the press and on the stump affecting Mr. Mackenzie's honesty. You have had dinned into your ears without intermission the "Steel Rail job," the "Georgian Bay Branch job," the "Goderich Harbor job," the "Fort Francis Locks job," the "Lachine Canal job," the great "Neebing Hotel job," and tho' last, not least, the charges made by the *Sarnia Canadian* (which, by the way, are the only direct charges ventured on. Sir John is too old and wily a politician not to prefer insinuations as they answer his purpose better), viz.: First, that Mr. Mackenzie had given information to a relative respecting a contemplated change in the tariff on the article of iron tubing and, second, that he had placed the terminus of the C. P. Ry. at Fort William instead of at Prince Arthur's Landing, because he had an interest in land at the former place. Charges which, if true, should only have one result, that of compelling Mr. Mackenzie's retirement from public life in disgrace, at least, I, as an honorable man and as one having the honor of the Reform Party at heart, could not support him in his position of Premier—no, not for one hour. Well, what did Mr. Mackenzie do? Without a moment's delay he commenced legal proceedings against the publishers of the paper for libel, resulting in the following letter of apology for the great wrong done to him:

SARNIA, June 4, 1878.

"Hon. Alexander Mackenzie :—

"SIR,—In our newspaper, the *Weekly Canadian*, we published two editorials, one of which you read as charging you with having informed Messrs. C. Mackenzie & Co., in advance of the announcement to Parliament, that it was the intention of your Government to propose a duty on iron tubing, and the other containing a charge that you had located the terminus of the Canada Pacific Railway at Fort William, on the Kaministiquia River, instead of at Prince Arthur's Landing, because you were interested in lands at the former place. When we published these articles we believed from information that we had received that the statements were true. Subsequent enquiry has, however, satisfied us beyond any doubt that our information was inaccurate, and that the charges already referred to were untrue. We very much regret their publication, and hereby tender you this apology.

"S. A. McVICAR,
"ROBT. MACADAMS."

And when tried by the same crucial test so would end "like the baseless fabric of a vision" all the other mendacious and wicked insinuations.

But why should I occupy your time in defending Mr. Mackenzie's character? It is surely unnecessary in the South Riding of Oxford when even my opponent, Mr. Gibson, has been forced to acknowledge from the platform that he believed Mr. Mackenzie to be as honest a man as there is in the Dominion and that his (Mr. Gibson's) Party talk a great deal of nonsense about Steel Rails, &c., &c. In view of this fact I may surely, as far as this constituency is concerned, take for granted that the election cry of dishonesty is as completely "played out" as the other one of incompetency.

But the Opposition have still another cry which they mean to do yeoman service at the coming election in their life-and-death struggle to again get control of the Treasury. Taking advantage of the hard times which we in Canada are at present enduring, in common with almost every civilized country in the world, they tell us that our workshops are closed, our artisans without employment and their families starving, our people emigrating in thousands to the United States in search of that work which is denied them at home, in fact, that the country is fast "going to the devil" and will assuredly, unless Sir John is again entrusted with the reins of government. Well, I dare say we are in a very bad way, perhaps much worse than we fancy and it may be well for us to look into the matter. And what is this wonderful nostrum that Sir John has discovered? This panacea that is to cure all the ills that Canadian flesh is heir to? He calls it the "National Policy," as embodied in his now famous resolution introduced last Session of Parliament. I may as well give you the prescription and you can judge for yourselves if it is worth the price he holds it at. It is as follows: "Resolved, that this House is of opinion that the welfare of Canada requires the adoption of a National Policy, which by a judicious re-adjustment of the tariff will benefit and foster the agricultural, the mining, the manufacturing and other interests of the Dominion. That such a policy will retain in Canada thousands of our fellow citizens now obliged to expatriate themselves in search of the employment denied them at home, will restore prosperity to our struggling industries now so sadly depressed, will prevent Canada from being made a sacrifice market, will encourage and develop an active inter-Provincial trade and moving (as it ought to do) in the direction of a Reciprocity of Tariff with our neighbors so far as the varied interests of Canada may demand, will tend to procure for this country eventually a reciprocity of Trade."

Now that you have read it if any of you have the smallest particle of faith in its virtues you have more than I have. It is certainly most adroitly worded, so cleverly so that I am sure that most acute individual, the proverbial Philadelphia lawyer, would be unable to fathom its profound depths. Sir John is a very clever disciple of that astute French statesman who said that the only real use of words was to conceal one's thoughts, and he has made use of his words in the above resolution so that they may mean anything or nothing, just as it suits the arch conjurer, who can be all things to all men if by any possibility he can humbug the electors to again trust him with the purse strings. Last year when in Hamilton the manufacturers of that city had an interview with him in order to ascertain what he purposed doing for them in the event of his getting back into power. He said, "Oh, that will be all right. You can come down to Ottawa and let me know what you require and I will suit the tariff to your individual necessities." Recently in Middlesex he addressed the people of that county and explained his "National Policy" to mean a Reciprocity of Tariffs with the United States. You all know that is for us an increase of customs duties on all goods we import. In all conscience we pay enough already, but in place of paying 17½ cents on the dollar, as we are now obliged to do, we would have to pay from 35 cents upwards, and all for what? to benefit a few manufacturers in the large towns who are already rolling in wealth.

But, Janus like, Sir John has two faces, one for Ontario and another for the Maritime Provinces. The people down there are a unit against further taxation; in fact, in order to get them to come into Confederation at all Sir John's own Government reduced the import duties from 20 to 15 per cent. Well, what does he tell the Nova Scotia free traders? He telegraphs them the other day that his National Policy will not hurt them in the least, that it does not mean "higher customs duties but merely a re-adjustment of the tariff." Janus, in the long time ago, made the two face business a success, but it is too late in the centuries, with the press and telegraph at work, for Sir John, clever as he is, to make it a success in this Dominion of ours, at any rate it can't be done in Oxford.

I will now ask you to go with me to some of the neighboring towns, so that you can see for yourselves if the manufacturing industries of the country are in the deplorably depressed state Sir John would have you believe, and first let us look in at Ingersoll, a manufacturing town which I often visit but fail to see that lack of employment and consequent destitution which Taxationist orators at Pic-nics in the rural districts are so fond of dilating upon and so graphically depict. We will visit the establishment of the Noxon Manufacturing Co'y., it being close to the station and as your time is limited we will take it as a sample of the rest, and what will Mr. James Noxon, the head of this great manufacturing enterprise, tell you? He will say to you as he wrote to Mr. Charlton, M. P., who read his letter to Parliament during last session, that the profits of his company last year were 28 per cent. on the paid up capital, that the prospects for this year were good, that there never was a more absurd cry than that manufacturers are languishing for the want of protection, and that the manufacturers of Canada are as prosperous as are the manufacturers of any country in the world at the present time. I think Mr. Noxon's evidence is of much greater value than Sir John's assertions.

We will now take a run down to Hamilton and see how the manufacturers are getting along in that hive of industry, but in place of visiting the various workshops I will give you an extract from a letter which recently appeared in the *Times* of that city:—

"Let me enumerate a few of the enlargements made by our leading manufacturers in their premises during the last four years. During that time Messrs. Copp & Bros' premises have been doubled in size, as have also those of Messrs. James Stewart & Co. A magnificent wing has been added to Messrs. E. & C. Garney's previously large premises. Messrs. D. Moore and Co. and Leidlav & Co's. premises have also been nearly doubled in size. Messrs. A. Wilson & Co., sewing-machine manufacturers, have built entirely new premises. Messrs. Wanzer & Co. have built a new foundry for their own use, and within the last few weeks obtained possession of another factory in this city. Messrs. Tuckett & Billings have doubled the size of their premises. Mr. James Reid, furniture manufacturer, built last year one of the finest furniture emporiums in this Dominion. Munro, Henderson & Mackenzie, manufacturers of clothing, had to remove this year to larger premises. Messrs. Sandford, Vail & Bickley are now engaged enlarging and beautifying their already large premises. Messrs. John Macpherson & Co. are now enlarging their boot and shoe factory. Messrs. John Garrett & Co. had to put another story on their boot and shoe factory very recently. And even Mr. James Walker, soap manufacturer, the Chairman of the Tory meeting, had to enlarge his premises on both sides of Bay street last year. There has also been a new clock factory started in this city lately. I give only what I consider the large items in the history of our advance in manufacturing industries during the last few years. Minor items of the same kind could be furnished in abundance."

Of my own personal knowledge I know the statements in the above extract to be true. I also know that the parties mentioned are now wealthy, that they began business in a small way and worked up their trade in the face of a lower tariff than we have now, and we may safely come to the conclusion that their respective industries require no more additional protection than does Mr. Noxon's.

Let us now see how the Cotton manufacturers are getting on down on the Welland Canal. I can't do better than give you another extract cut out of a paper last night. It is as follows :

"Mr. W. W. Wait, of Merriton, complained at a recent Opposition convention in St. Catharines that 'he was one of the victims of free trade.' He stated that he was the first cotton manufacturer in Canada, and that as soon as the 'Yankees' found it out they 'destroyed' him. All this happened four years ago, and therefore under the fiscal system of the Macdonald Government, though we do not hear of any effort having been made to get the Government to come to his rescue while he was *in extremis*. Mr. Wait sold his manufacturing establishment to Mr. James Dolan, of St. Catharines, and that gentleman gave at a recent meeting the result of his acquaintance with and experience in the manufacture of cotton. 'No trade,' he said, 'had done so well,' and he described the outlook as much better than it was a short time ago, alleging further that the Canadian manufacturers can compete successfully with those of the United States. Mr. Dolan's tone of manly independence will carry with the Canadian public infinitely more weight than the querulous complaining of Mr. Wait. How, in view of such a case, can it be satisfactorily ascertained how much of the killing off of Canadian industries is due to foreign competition, and how much to want of business aptitude or capacity? It is quite clear, at all events, on Mr. Dolan's showing, that the cotton industry must be placed on the list of those not needing more protection than they now have, and his statement is fully borne out by the large returns cotton manufacturers receive from their investments."

We will on our way home look in on Brantford and see what manufacturers are doing there. I give you another newspaper extract referring to a very enterprising firm in that city :

"An additional proof of the vitality of our manufacturing industries is furnished by the fact that the Watrous Engine Works Company, of Brantford, have just shipped one of their portable saw mills to Germany, making the seventh sent to foreign countries this year. Manufacturing establishments that are well managed and are intended to produce articles suited to the capacity of the country need no more protection than they have. To ask for protection with a view to encourage manufactures which are unable to live without it after they are started is to insult the common sense of the community. Most of the business failures of manufacturers, like the business failures of other people, are due to mismanagement of some kind, or else over-competition at home, from which no tariff can protect them."

The next is from the *Ontario Reformer* referring to an important industry in the town of Oshawa. It says :

"The Oshawa Malleable Iron Company's works are being enlarged over 70 per cent. of their present power of production. It adds : 'The works have been taxed to their utmost capacity during the past year, in fact have not been able to do anything like the business that has been offered them. They have been obliged to refuse a great many orders.' And yet Sir John and his taxationist friends say the manufacturing industries of the country are going to the dogs."

I could give you newspaper extracts without end all of the same tenor, but I will only trouble you with one more, a very little one, and I am sure my Conservative friends will acknowledge its truthfulness as they are the words of Sir John himself. At a Masonic pic-nic on the 1st of July he spoke as follows :—"I thank God's providence, here we are on the tenth anniversary of Dominion Day, a PROSPEROUS AND CONTENTED PEOPLE, an orderly and law-abiding people, with good hope of the future, having confidence in ourselves and in our future prosperity." No ambiguity here. He who runs can read. I do like Sir John when he speaks as a statesman.

I hope you are now all prepared irrespective of your political leanings to agree with me that this cry may as well be put under ground along with the other two.

We have now seen what a revenue tariff has done and is still doing for the manufacturing interests of Canada and, as Sir John is continually preaching up the prosperity of the United States all owing to protection, it may be as well to hear what our cousins have themselves to say on the subject, as it's not always safe to take everything Sir John says for gospel. I will first quote from a speech delivered during last session of Congress by General Butler from the great manufacturing state of Massachusetts. He was appealing to Congress to appropriate sufficient money to enable destitute artisans to be removed from the manufacturing cities to the prairie lands in the West where they could earn a living for themselves and families by turning farmers, and as the General has always been a strong Protectionist I think my friends of that persuasion ought to allow him to be a good authority. This is what he said :—

"There is no fact more patent, no omen more portentous and alarming to all who carefully examine the state of the country than the great lack of employ-

ment for the industrial classes of men and women in the Middle and Eastern States, and some two or more of the larger cities of the West. By industrial classes, I mean those who support themselves by wages for their labor, whether skilled or unskilled. . . . All classes of employers of every branch of business have been reducing the number of their employees and the rates of wages within the strictest and sternest possible limits, until hundreds of thousands of industrious men and women and their families, who have heretofore lived from wages, are reduced to the point of starvation for the want of employment, or are barely eking out existence upon the too meagre returns from their labor. This state of things has come while bountiful harvests have been gathered in year after year, and the granaries of the West are bursting with breadstuffs; her plains and meadows teeming with cattle, sheep and swine for meat, and all this in addition to the millions of dollars' worth of provisions loaded upon the ships of the merchant marine of Europe to supply the wants of the poor of other nations. We find the evil to be of a twofold character: First—*Insufficient employment for labor for millions of men and women, who would labor if they could find employment.* Second—*Insufficient wages for the laborers who are employed to meet the ordinary necessities, not to say comforts, of life.* He who labors and produces ought to enjoy. . . . That these constitute an evil so extensive as to be a public wrong, both in the ordinary and legal acceptance of the term need not be argued. This is too painfully apparent to him who reads current history."

The General's picture is anything but pleasant and certainly offers but poor encouragement to the thousands of Sir John's "fellow countrymen now obliged to expatriate themselves in search of the employment denied them at home."

Now for the evidence of quite another sort of witness, that of William Cullen Bryant, who died recently, greatly to his country's loss. He was a true patriot and a thorough gentleman. He is speaking of the late years during which the manufacturers of the United States have been protected by a tariff ranging from 35 to 100 per cent. and upwards. This is what he said and every word is true:—

"And what years, my friends, were these? Years of languishing enterprise, years of despairing industry, years of strikes, years of contention between the employers and employed, years which showed the spectacle of laborers by hundreds looking in vain for occupation, and hunger-pinched families shivering in their unwarmed garrets. All this while the protective system, as it is called, has been in full force. Everything is protected, that is to say, everything imported into the country is taxed as it never was before. If the protective system be the ground of commercial prosperity, the country should now be prosperous beyond the ground of all previous experience. Our mills, now silent, should be in constant employment; not a willing arm should now be idle, not a spindle should cease to hum. Is it not time for a re-action? Are we to go on in this manner indefinitely? We have tried the protective system as fully as is possible. We have tasted its fruits and they are bitter. Let us now have a season of free exchange. I have no doubt, for my own part, that a liberal system of revenue laws, especially combined with a return to specie payments, would make an instantaneous and most fortunate change in the condition of the country. Yes, my friends, the time for a reaction has arrived, and we are determined it shall have a fair field. Free trade has slept while its enemies have been performing their unhappy experiments upon the public welfare, and now we look to see it rise invigorated by its long slumber. . . . "Let me say that I am in favor of protection, but of a protection of a kind very different

from that which for many years past has dealt so cruelly with the interests of the country. I am for protecting the consumers, the class whose numbers are counted by millions. I am for protecting this class in its natural and proper right to exchange what it produces in whatever market it can exchange it to most advantage. I am for rescuing it from the hands into which it has fallen, and which plunder it with as little remorse as the rovers of the Barbary States, in the early part of this century, pillaged the merchant ships that entered their seas."

I will now give you two or three extracts from the recent message of the Governor of the State of New York and this is what he tells his Legislature and I desire you to ponder well on his words.

"The depression in all branches of trade, business and manufacture, and the wreck of our too numerous railroad, mining, iron and milling ventures, have thrown out of employ a vast number of laboring men, who, without fault of their own, are now suffering extreme want." "At the same time another great evil was strongly developed. Individuals and corporations engaged in the various branches of manufacture, taking advantage of the necessities of the Government, rushed to Congress and, by every means in their power, procured, each for its own benefit, the levy of what were called protective duties, under the false pretence of raising revenue for the Government, but really to *compel consumers to pay exorbitant prices for the favored articles thus protected*. Under the wing and stimulus of this so-called protection, new enterprises were undertaken, new and extensive factories built, new and needless railways projected and undertaken, new mines and foundries opened, and armies of laborers allured by high wages to these enterprises from fields of agriculture and other sober and rational employments of life. The few notes of warning raised against the certain consequences of this wild overaction were unheeded. Extravagance of expenditure, the absence of everything like frugality and economy obtained in all directions. The empty and delusive bubble thus raised could not endure, and although kept afloat by the whole power of the Government so long as it was possible, it met at last the inevitable day of doom. Imaginary fortunes vanished in a moment, ill-advised railway schemes, mines, mills and factories were suspended, and *tens of thousands of innocent and unfortunate laborers were left without employment or the means of subsistence. Instead of the high wages by which they had been enticed from other occupations to these enterprises, they received no wages at all.*" "There can be but one permanent and effectual remedy. That is, to return as speedily as possible to the condition of things that existed before the road to ruin was entered upon; by means of a return to specie payments, a sound and stable currency, and the reduction of the tariff to a *strictly revenue standard.*"

Now, gentlemen, you have the evidence of three independent eye-witnesses who know whereof they speak. How does the account of the situation tally with the mendacious statements of Tory stump orators?

And this is the country Sir John desires us to imitate, and theirs the fiscal policy (which has brought that country to the deplorable state depicted above) that he would have us adopt. Oh, yes! He still thinks the fools are not all dead, and if we would only give him one more chance he will give us the benefit of his newly-discovered philosopher's stone which he warrants will turn

everything into gold. The great magician has only to wave his wand from the Treasury bench when, *presto!* everything will change. This fair Canada will blossom like the rose, the land will flow with milk and honey and everyone will become rich. Great is humbug and Sir John is its prophet!

Once upon a time, some 400 years ago, there lived in England a gentleman, Sir John Cade was his name. He likewise desired to oust the Mackenzie of his day. He also held pic-nics and great crowds went to hear what he had to say and when he got on the stump this is what he said:—"Be brave, my friends, for your leader is brave and vows reformation. When I am Premier there shall be in England seven half-penny loaves sold for one penny. The three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops, and I will make it felony to drink small beer. All the realm shall be in common and everyone shall eat at my expense."

History repeats itself and after an interval of four centuries here we are in this Canada of ours with a Sir John of our own animated with the same desires and aspirations and equally lavish in his promises of good things to come. On the whole, if anything he betters the instruction of his ancient prototype.

Let us now see how we stand as regards this National Policy of his. I have shown you by the incontrovertible evidence of the parties most interested that our manufacturing industries are not in the depressed condition represented, that our artisans are not compelled to expatriate themselves, that all legitimate business is in a state of progression and that capital judiciously placed gives an ample return.

I have also shown you the other side of the shield and have proved by evidence equally incontrovertible that our friends over the way who are now in the full enjoyment of this blessed National Policy are in a very bad way indeed, with their furnaces unlighted, their workshops closed, their mechanics and laboring men out of employment, their families on the verge of starvation and their capitalists without dividends.

I have not indulged, like my Opposition friends, in manufacturing unveracious lies which they would like to pass current for facts. I have dealt only in facts that are patent to all except those who are willfully blind, and "facts are stubborn chiefs that winna ding and downa be disputed."

Gentlemen, I have too much faith in your intelligence and patriotism to fancy for a moment that you will lend your ears to the charmer but that you will tell him at the polls that you will not have his "National Policy" at any price for it is only another name for National Ruin, for it means the erection of a Chinese wall all along our extensive frontier sentinelled by an army of Custom House officers, for it means largely increased taxation, for it means the formation of rings with their natural accompaniment of log-rolling and bribery, for it means inflation and extravagance, for it means drafting labor from the country into the large cities, for it means over-production ending in bankruptcy, closed factories, idle mechanics, hungry tramps, and last but not least, it must finally result in separation from that glorious old land across the sea.

The land that freemen till,
That sober suited freedom choose ;
The land, when girt with friends or foes,
A man may speak the thing he will.

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent.

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fulness wrought ;
The strength of some diffusive thought,
Hath time and space to work and spread.

What an extraordinary interest Sir John and his already wealthy Protectionist friends take in us farmers at the present time. They would like to persuade us that they know our interests better than we do ourselves. It's the old, old story. "Says the spider to the fly, come into my parlor my little dear." Don't you do it for it's your very life blood that's wanted.

They tell you what a grand thing Protection will be for you. Large cities will spring up as if by magic, which will give you a more extended market and consequently you will get a higher price for what you have to sell, but don't believe a word of it. The people in the cities will not pay one cent more for your produce than the market price, which is regulated by the requirements of our friends in Great Britain—our best market for almost everything we produce. We now send there our flour, oatmeal, barley, butter, cheese, cattle, horses, sheep, pork, fruit, &c., all admitted free of duty and for which we get the highest price going.

Oh yes, the spiders are very friendly just now, and they wish to make us a present of the National Policy—something, as far as we are concerned, very much like throwing away a sprat to catch a whale. They would consent to placing a duty on all grain coming into the country, which they tell us would put lots of money into our purses. I won't insult your intelligence by attempting to refute this gross fallacy. The only effect of shutting out American farm produce would be to ruin our railroad and shipping interests, to close up a large number of our milling establishments which grind for export, and to render comparatively valueless our costly canals. But even if it did increase the price a few cents on the bushel on what oats and corn we do not require for our own use, (which I do not admit), look at what we would have to pay for the great boon in the increased prices of every article we would require to buy. As a mercantile transaction it would be something like getting one dollar in exchange for fifteen, the difference going into the pockets of capitalists.

We, as farmers, at present are much more favorably situated in every respect than the farmer in the U. States and have nothing to envy them for. They have been humbugged into assenting to a protective tariff under the belief that they would get a higher price for their produce, but what is the fact? In the year 1874 they exported \$561,983,286 worth of the produce of the soil to foreign countries and had to sell it for the price the foreigner was willing to pay. Can you fancy for amoment that the people in the manufacturing centres in their

own country were so extremely generous as to pay the farmer for his produce one cent more than the market price which is the price in London, less freight, commissions, etc. The American farmer has long ago seen through the trick played upon him but has been too powerless as yet to fight the infamous combination of rings created by capitalists to corrupt the Legislature. But rings won't rule always. The farmer, the bone and sinew of the country, will before long rise in his might and then selfish rascality had better look out.

To show you how the American farmer "has to pay for his whistle" I will give you an extract from a speech made in the House of Representatives by Mr. Marshall, of Illinois. He said:—

"The farmer starting to his work has a shoe put on his horse with nails taxed 67 per cent., with a hammer taxed 54 per cent.; cuts a stick with a knife taxed 50 per cent, hitches his horse to a plow taxed 50 per cent., with chains taxed 67 per cent. He returns to his home at night and lays his wearied limbs on a sheet taxed 58 per cent. and covers himself with a blanket that has paid 250 per cent. He rises in the morning, puts on his humble flannel shirt taxed 80 per cent., shoes taxed 35 per cent., hat taxed 70 per cent.; reads a chapter from his Bible taxed 25 per cent. and kneels to his God on a cheap carpet taxed 150 per cent. Sits down to breakfast, eats from a plate taxed 40 per cent., with knife and fork taxed 35 per cent.; drinks his cup of coffee taxed 47 per cent., or if he indulges in tea 78 per cent., with sugar 70 per cent.; seasons his food with salt taxed 100 per cent, pepper 297 per cent., or spice 379 per cent. He looks around upon his wife and children all taxed in the same way; takes a chew of tobacco taxed 100 per cent. and if he indulges in a cigar he has first to pay a tax of 120 per cent. and then he is expected to thank his stars that he lives under the freest Government under heaven."

What think you of that, my friends? Don't you think we had better let well alone? Protection is a grand thing for the capitalist manufacturers, but not even for them in the long run, but it's death to the farmer and laboring man.

I have endeavored as briefly as possible to put the question at issue between the two great political parties squarely before you. I have made use of no *ad captandum* or meretricious arguments. That's the prerogative, the stock-in-trade of Taxationist orators. I have given you only facts, stubborn facts. In the nature of things it's impossible that all men should think alike, and there must always be two parties. Our system of Government is such that of necessity there must be two, representing the distinct principles of Conservatism and Reform.

I belong to the Reform Party, but I am not one of those that lays the flattering unction to his soul that his party is the sole custodian of all truth. I believe that a great truth underlies Conservatism, although at the present time in this country, through the gross selfishness of the party leaders, it has gone down so deep into the well that for the present it has become almost invisible. In their lust for office they forget their Conservatism and preach revolution.

You will soon be called upon to pass judgment to decide which party shall rule the destinies of this country for the next five years. I do not claim perfection for Mr. Mackenzie. No doubt he is liable to make mistakes like other mortals. But this I claim for him, that he is an able and wise ruler, a true patriot and a thoroughly honest man without one stain on his character,

As for his opponent, Sir John, I have no desire to say anything unkind or seemingly harsh. I have always had a liking for him. I still like him for his many good qualities, and I feel grateful to him for his services to the country in the past, and would be sorry not to see him in the House ; at the same time I can't be blind to his faults. When in power he committed a grave political offence—an offence which struck at the very root of the purity and independence of Parliament. On that account I am not willing that he should be re-instated. But the offence he then committed was venial when compared with the one he now desires to perpetrate, for the doctrine he now preaches is revolutionary, and if carried out will not only be the utter ruin of the country but must inevitably end in bursting asunder the chain that binds us to that Mother-land, which was done and is still doing so much for us. Believing such to be the legitimate results of the adoption of his "National Policy," as a patriot, as a lover of that dear old land, of its Queen and of its institutions, but above and beyond all, as a *Canadian*, I, for one, whether in or out of Parliament, will fight against him and his policy to the bitter end.

I now leave the matter entirely in your hands, having confidence that you will use your franchise in the interests of good, stable, honest and economical government, and that you will again honor me by electing me as your representative to the Parliament of the Dominion.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,

Your much obliged and obedient servant,

JAS. A. SKINNER.

DUNELG, 12th Aug., 1878.

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